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**Full Length Research**

# Records Managers' Capacity Building for Sustainable Information Management in Nigeria

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The study is on capacity building for records managers for sustainable information management in Nigeria. The study examined the present state of records and information management in Nigeria and the role records managers play in creating and managing public records. Without the concrete input and total control of the professionals in information management, such venture would be futile. Records and information are prerequisite in achieving government's goal of good governance and the capacity to manage public records rest in the hands of professionally trained records staff, led by the records manager. A descriptive survey method was used to carry out the study in selected ministries in Nigeria. Data was collected from respondents through a questionnaire and analysed using simple percentages. It was found that the federal ministries create and manage e-mail, word processed files, database records, internet information sources in addition to paper records. However, no trained Records Managers are employed in the ministries. It was therefore recommended that the federal government should recruit professionally trained records managers to ensure sustainable records and information management in federal ministries.

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Records Management, Capacity Building, Information Management, Federal Ministries

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## INTRODUCTION

Various Nigerian governments have made efforts to actualize the much-touted potentials of our great country and it seems we are at a crossroad. After numerous false starts and inability to succeed, we are once again set on a journey to nowhere, bereft of well-thought out fundamentals of Nigeria's political economy. The goal this time around is touted as leapfrogging the country from the nadir of hopelessness and underdevelopment to the rarified group of the most developed economies of the world (Oyebode, 2008). In the year 2000, world leaders committed themselves to a millennium declaration tagged the "millennium developmental goals" (MDG) under the United Nations, while setting key objectives for the 21st century to be realised by 2015. It is aimed at peace and security, development and poverty eradication, securing human rights, democracy and good governance among others.

The eight (8) goals so stated "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development", are vital for national development and good governance worldwide. While nations are making frantic efforts to achieving these, the

Nigerian government strategically lunched the Nigeria vision 20:2020 agenda. The Nigeria vision 20:2020 statement avers that "by the year 2020, Nigeria will have a large, strong, diversified, sustainable and competitive economy that effectively harnesses the talents and energies of its people and responsibly exploits its natural endowments to guarantee a high standard of living and quality of life to its citizens" (Nigerian Vision 20:2020 Community, 2010). That is to say that Nigeria would be one of the top 20 economies in the world of nations by the year 2020.

This vision is focused on agriculture, information and communication technology, education, manufacturing, health, infrastructural development and the polity. As the years go by, the seeming inability of Nigerian government to achieve the set goals unfolds. Hence, the need to key into the UN 2030 agenda of sustainable development goals for a better and more sustainable future for all. However, the issue of records management for sustainable government information management is been undermined. The eight MDG goals was expanded into 17 to address all aspects of human endeavours, but the Nigerian experience leaves much to be desired. At a presidential retreat on "Public Private Partnership (PPP) Imperative for Infrastructure Development", the former President, Dr Goodluck Jonathan noted the backwardness of the nation's economy over the years, which he attributed to contract over-invoicing and other sharp practices that made execution of budgets almost impossible in the 50 years of the nation's history (Ailemen, 2010). Public leadership must guide decisions and actions for sustainable quality services from public institutions (Basheka & Sabola, 2015).

In the Nigeria's MDGs Countdown Strategy for 2010 – 2015, it was reported that currently, federal government ministries, departments and agencies, and state and local governments do not effectively plan and implement projects and programmes to achieve the MDG targets (FGN, 2012). While there are various reasons for this, lack of capacity is a major factor ([www.mdgs.gov.ng](http://www.mdgs.gov.ng)). Also, Benson, Anyanwu, Unuoha and Nwauwa (2016) posit that lack of reliable and accurate data, negligence of Library and Information Centres by governments, poor perceptions of the library profession, low level of private sector interest in library services, poor lobbying and advocacy skills amongst information professionals, paying lip services to library development programmes by government, etc. are challenges affecting the realization of SDG in Nigeria.

These challenges over these years is as a result of governments' officials not keeping, managing and using necessary records, information/data or ever made reference to available records for sustainable governance. It is worthy of note that achieving the set goals is hinged on the ability of government to build capacity in terms of *records managers* for the creation, maintenance and use, dissemination and disposition of public records. The use of relevant records will help to create awareness / sensitizing citizens, support research, provision of educational information to improve quality of education, reduce poverty, improve on the environment, etc.

Therefore, building capacity to ensure sustainability in the capture, storage, use, conservation and preservation of national records and resources, and the exchange and sharing of information and experience among communities in the country (Maranga, 1999) cannot be overemphasised. Some information science researchers have begun to explore the dimensions of sustainable information services and technologies (The Scientific World, 2019; Stasinopoulos, Hargroves, Smith, Desha and Hargroves, 2008), which has become the order of the day, even in records creation and management. Building capacity in human capital development would be the process of transforming the nation's ability to effectively implement policies and programmes for sustainable information management. Hence, this paper examined the role of records and information piloted by records managers in the federal ministries, Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Records Managers and Government Information Management

Public administration is the key to the delivery of public service. Public administrators comprise the bulk of government employment and activities (Peters & Pierre, 2013). They are responsible for providing services, implementing laws and influencing policy by advising the politicians responsible for making laws. There are various ministries in Nigeria where government policies are generated and implemented. Such government policy records among others are found in the public registries.

Registry personnel are involved in the day-to-day management of records and were therefore, in a position to provide relevant data relating to how records were managed throughout their continuum. Kemoni and Ngulube (2008) reported that in Kenya, public servants lacked the attributes of accountability, honesty, impartiality, quality of service, professionalism and motivation. These practices are not different from the Nigerian situation. The public service had been perceived as an obstacle to development and yet central in meeting various needs (Lanceu & Maket, 2012). These needs included security, formulation and implementation of policies, disaster management, dispensing justice, regulation of social and commercial activities and facilitating development. Kilelo (2015) opined that the declining social values such as honesty, integrity, impartiality and fairness amongst others affect the dysfunctional attributes of the public



service in Africa. As such, there are ineffective systems of control and discipline, disruption of organizational processes, poor work ethics, ethnicity and patronage in recruitment, promotion and personal advancement and breakdown of administrative hierarchies. Public sector reform programmes in Africa focused on reforming the public service by making it an effective tool for national development (Mutahaba & Kiragu, 2002). The reform programmes emphasized public service capacity building, planning, budgeting, performance improvement and human resource management.

From the foregoing, these vices in public services identified above could be checked with records management programme in place and professional personnel who administers the records. Therefore, the records managers are essential resource in government information management (Iwhiwhu, 2012). Some of the factors contributing to the current state of recordkeeping in government ministries included:

- i. neglected registry units in the ministries
- ii. lack of support from senior officers
- iii. absence of records management committees
- iv. registry staff had few opportunities for training
- v. records management was a neglected area in the ministries, and registries were viewed as dumping grounds for unproductive and undisciplined officers
- vi. inadequate record storage space
- vii. health and safety of registry staff was not taken into account.

All these revolve round the personnel used in the ministries and in records management in particular. Hurley (2005) pointed out that records keepers and accountability advocates seem to agree that in support of accountability, good record systems must exist which are complete, authentic and reliable (dependable), accessible and usable.

Records management is key to public sector management. Records constitute the basic administrative tools by means of which the work of a government is accomplished. Poor records management undermines civil service reform programmes, since the ability to retrieve information about government services was a major criterion of successful public sector management (Maranga, 1999). It was noted by De Mingo and Agustí Cerrillo-i-Martínez (2018) that without proper records management, accountability, transparency and efficiency in public service would be heavily compromised. In Ghana, Akotia (2003) argued that the provision for records management improvement marked a shift in the development management strategies of Ghana, since effective management of public sector financial information was a crucial factor in providing capacity for public sector efficiency and governance.

Iwhiwhu (2008) noted the bewildering volumes of records that must be properly and adequately managed to make for effective and efficient decision making and governance, and that mal-administration and lapses exist in Nigeria due to inadequate management and use of public records. Poor records management has hindered the implementation of public sector reforms in Africa (Thurston & Cain, 1996). These authors further noted that in developing countries, poor records management has also hampered the ability of governments to manage resources and effectively comply with international agreements and donor conditions and fulfill their responsibilities. Lipchack (2002) stressed that studies dealing with recordkeeping and good governance in Sub-Saharan Africa concluded that governments were unable to implement effective public sector reforms in part because of the following:

- i. not having information to develop and support reform policies and processes
- ii. not knowing what information was needed to undertake various government functions
- iii. not being able to rely on available information
- iv. not using available information in decision making or analysis.

Poor records management practices have adverse consequences for public service delivery. For example, officials are forced to take decisions on an ad hoc basis, without the benefit of precedence or historical memory. Resources are wasted, as unwarranted records continue to be stored. Fraud cannot be proven and meaningful reporting and audits cannot be carried out, government actions are not transparent and citizens cannot claim or protect their rights, nor can they be required to fulfill their duties and obligations, and citizens cannot make an informed contribution to the governance process (Roper & Williams, 1999).

The service provided by records management is vital to any enterprise and to every information-using employee. Its primary function is to facilitate the free flow of information, to ensure that information is available rapidly where and when it is needed. Carrying out this function needs an efficient, effective records management programme (De Wet & Du Toit, 2000).

### Capacity building for Records Managers

According to Ogunsola (2011), the concept of "capacity building" is a popular phrase in development discourse. It is one of the most urgent challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa today. It is indeed a challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as technologies and markets are being revolutionized, compelling Africa to seek for the right kind of professionally competent people and institutions to meet the challenges. It must be realized that governments, non-state actors, and (foreign) donors all tend to invoke capacity problems to explain why policies fail to deliver, or why aid is not generating sustainable impacts.

Professional development helps build confidence through knowledge, experience, and skills necessary to practice effectively. This can be termed as capacity. Capacity building is a measurable improvement in an organization's ability to fulfill its mission through a blend of sound management, strong governance, and dedication to assessing and achieving results (Monson-Rosen, n.d). Nsouli (2000) simply refers to it as the development of skills and institutions. In the opinion of Dia (1996), capacity building is characterized by three main activities: skill upgrading (general and job specific); procedural improvements and organizational strengthening. Obadan (2003) defined capacity building as those deliberate and incidental endeavours through investment in people, institutions and practices, to enhance human abilities and institutional capacities in the pursuit of development. In essence, capacity building means the process of enhancing individual skills, or strengthening the competence of a particular organization.

It is crucial also to state here that capacity building as a concept is treated and understood in economic and social development contexts. Building capacity is about building an organization's ability to perform well. The concept of capacity has been defined as the power of something to perform or to produce. From the UNDP's perspective, it is the ability of individuals and organizations or units to perform functions effectively, efficiently, or sustainably. Capacity has both human (training and development) and institutional (organizational development) dimensions with the following components (Maredia, 2011 and Ogunsola, 2011):

- i. skilled human resources
- ii. leadership and vision
- iii. viable institutions
- iv. financial and material resources and
- v. effective work practices, including systems, procedures and appropriate incentives.

Human capacity in this case refers to the records manager's capability to perform the tasks necessary for ministries to achieve its goals. Adequate capacity engenders self-reliance, and provides a country and its people with the ability to make sound economic choices, create sustainable policies, and solve problems. Realistically, professional development or the concept of capacity building would be enhanced if it is linked to work situation. Convincingly, the greatest resource for any kind of development is people. Capability development and the management of talent are crucial to people management strategies because they act to improve employee engagement and commitment, encourage high performance, and improve retention (Re:locate Global, 2020). Rare talent that is difficult to imitate is particularly crucial to organisational success, as it acts as a differentiator. Hence, identifying, recruiting, selecting, deploying and developing talent globally are a key part of the human resource and global mobility functions' remit.

For records managers to function successfully, he must be flexible enough to update his skills with the ever-changing technologies. Thus, there is the challenge of giving adequate priority to the development and utilization of capacity. It must be stressed that capacity does not only have to be built but also, has to be effectively utilized. There are trained records managers in Nigeria that are not been utilized. There is need to recruit skilled personnel, retain and use them by ensuring that they have productive jobs, satisfying work, and secured conditions. Effective utilization of capacity is better appreciated in successful development management and the attainment of development goals.

Adetoro, et. al. (2010) noted that capacity failures, most often, had been fingered for the continued development problems of poor countries; for the failures of policies or why investment and aids are not generating desired impact. There is no doubt that the essence of building capacity in all areas of human life, including the field of records management in Nigeria, is to enhance the ability of federal ministries to efficiently manage information on their own, in a smooth and sustainable way.

Capacity building is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world (Ann Philbin, Capacity Building in Social Justice Organizations Ford Foundation, 1996). Performance management is the practice of managing records service response time, consistency, and quality for individual and overall services. Performance problems are usually related to capacity. Ministries need to collect some capacity-related information and work consistently to solve problems, plan changes and implement new capacity and performance functionality.

## Role of Records Management in Attaining the SDGs Agenda

Records management ensures that all records made or received by Federal ministries that document its organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations and other activities, regardless of who created it or how the information was recorded, must be identified, classified, retained and disposed-off in accordance with authorized procedures. Records act as the 'voice' of an agency in legal proceedings. As such, the information security of record-generating systems, and indeed, of the electronic records themselves, is paramount in assuring that records will serve as reliable evidence of agency's actions and that this reliability is guaranteed over time (i.e., authenticity). Failure to ensure such reliability, via suitable information security, can call into question the recordkeeping practices of an agency (i.e. arbitrary and capricious practices) presenting substantial legal risk to an agency (Kemoni & Ngulube, 2008).

Records management is a key component of information management. The reasons being that records management:

- i. Is one of the most disciplined and well-defined components of information management.
- ii. Brings critical business records under control of the agency.
- iii. Can provide a single point of access to important records previously controlled by functional areas or specific individuals.
- iv. Supports record authenticity and reliability.
- v. Permits access to records throughout their lifecycle for use and reuse, protecting their structure and context, as well as their contents from alteration or revision.
- vi. Permits the attachment of retention and disposition instructions to critical business records.
- vii. Can manage both hard copy and electronic records.

As a result, the following questions shall be considered:

- i. Does the current organizational placement of the RM staff in ministries make sense in the electronic record keeping (ERK) environment?
- ii. Do the ministries have an up-to-date listing of records?
- iii. Do the ministries have an enterprise-wide classification scheme or file plan?
- iv. Do all staff understand and know how to use the ministries' file plan?
- v. Do ministries have records schedules, which contain business rules regarding how records of value are maintained?

Providing answers to these questions would reveal the importance of using professionals in the business of information management and good records keeping practices in ensuring sustainable information management. Strengthening the public service and public service delivery programmes is essential for the development process (International Monetary Fund, 2003). It can therefore be argued that records management is vital for enhanced public service delivery and the attainment of UN SDGs in various sectors of national development (Kemoni & Ngulube, 2008). The achievement of SDGs can be hampered by limited access to government records. As a result, there is a need to have in place good record keeping systems, which include the presence of legislation, properly classified records with appropriate access and file tracking tools, recruitment of trained staff, including measures to update their skills, and timely appraisal and disposal of records. The importance of complete and comprehensive record-keeping that would make better job efficiency cannot be overemphasized.

The value of these records for every aspect of human endeavour and for posterity has been greatly acknowledged (Johnson, 1991). Kemoni (2007) established that existing policies and practices for managing records in government ministries were not effective and that this negatively affects public service delivery. Thurston (1996) stated that "records management is a key component of any public sector reform programme, the efficiency of which includes enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service." Records management can play a role in addressing the political, economic and social challenges faced by a nation.

These challenges include overcoming corruption, reviving the economy, security and enhancing transparency and accountability. Mnjama (2003) avers that recordkeeping in the Kenyan public sector was not satisfactory and that "poor records management had devastating consequences" (Musembi, 2004). The benefits of effective records management, as listed by Blake (2005), include supporting efficient joint working and information exchange, facilitating evidence based policy making and supporting the administration of data protection principles and effective implementation of Freedom of Information and other legislation through good organization of records. Other benefits include supporting accountability by providing reliable records of actions and decisions and knowledge management across sectors of government by making reliable information available for sharing, extraction and summarization.

Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) emphasized the link between records keeping to the attainment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) objectives, stating that "good record keeping practices would be the key to enhanced public service delivery and attainment of NEPAD's objectives." In the same vein, attaining the SDG in Nigeria is hinged

on the keeping and management of accurate and reliable records. One of the key aspects of NEPAD was the African peer review mechanism, in which member states evaluated each other on their commitment to promote democracy and human rights.

## **THE PROBLEM**

Preliminary investigation has revealed that the federal ministries in Nigeria do not have professionally trained personnel managing civil service records. Unavailability of, or inaccurate records due to poor recordkeeping practices could hinder government's efforts for economic recovery, providing basic services to citizens, good governance and ensuring the rule of law. It could also lead to delayed services to citizens and poor image, which could undermine efficiency and effectiveness in the public service. These seem to have characterized civil service operations in Nigeria. Records management in the public sector was in a very poor state, from the registries, where current records were found, to the records rooms, where semi-current and non-current records were stored. These are visible in the ministries.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study is on capacity building for records managers for sustainable information management in Nigeria. It examined the present state of records and information management in Nigeria and the role record managers' play in preserving national memory in public records of value for posterity. Without the concrete input and total control of the professionals in information management, such venture would be futile. The framework for enhanced information management and dissemination will be at abeyance in Nigeria and thereby hinder the attainment of the SDGs.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive survey method was used to carry out this study in selected ministries in Nigeria. The executive and administrative staff, Information Technology staff and directors who were involved in records creation, use and maintenance, disposition and management of government records and their use in decision making were used as respondents. The ministries used are as follows; Office of the Head of Service of the Federation, Federal Civil Service Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Lands and Housing, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Information and Communication. Data were collected from respondents through the questionnaire and the data obtained were analysed using simple percentages.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results are hereby presented below. Table 1 shows the ministries and category of respondents used for the study. From the results obtained, it was found that 264 (62%) males and 159 (38%) females were involved in the study. The majority of the respondents' ages fall within 26 and 45 years (309, 73%). This indicates that the civil service workforce is made up of middle aged civil servants who would be able to cope with the rigors of managing civil service records. Also, majority of the respondents who are not below the rank of a higher executive officer or administrative officer have worked for between 1-10 years (151, 36%), except those at the director/permanent secretary's cadre whose work experiences fall within 16 years and above 26 years (90, 21%). These respondents have occupied these positions for within 6 – 15 years (64, 53%). In the same vein, majority of the records management staff has been managing civil service records for between 1 – 10 years (138, 63%).

**Table 1:** Ministries Used and Staff responses

s/n	Ministry	Questionnaires Administered	Records management staff	IT staff	Directors/Deputies	Total
1	Finance	55	25	5	15	46
2	Education	72	35	10	17	63
3	Information and Com.	57	26	10	11	48
4	Justice	51	24	3	14	42
5	Foreign Affairs	75	32	15	18	66
6	Science and Tech.	60	15	25	10	51
7	Head of service	71	36	10	15	62
8	Civil Service Com.	54	27	5	12	45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>423</b>

**Table 2:** Types of electronic records (n=220 for RM)

Types of E-Record	Yes	No	I don't know
Paper records	158 (72%)	44 (20%)	18 (0.8%)
E-mail	104 (47.3%)	85 (38.6%)	21 (14.1%)
Word processed files	107 (48.6%)	88 (40%)	25 (11.4%)
Graphics/Arial information	42 (19.2%)	119 (54.1%)	59 (16.8%)
Spreadsheet files	84 (38.2%)	76 (34.5%)	60 (27.3%)
Optical Image files	17 (7.7%)	125 (56.8%)	78 (35.4%)
Sound recordings (audio/video files)	47 (21.4%)	120 (54.5%)	53 (24.1%)
Web pages/documents (internet information sources)	118 (53.6%)	64 (29.1%)	38 (17.2%)
Database records	105 (47.7%)	75 (34.1%)	40 (18.1%)
Electronic reports	65 (29.5%)	90 (40.9%)	65 (29.6%)
Electronic publications	53 (24.1%)	91 (41.4%)	76 (34.6%)
Voice mail files	14 (6.4%)	110 (50%)	96 (43.9%)
Electronic records of directories	63 (28.6%)	98 (44.5%)	59 (26.8%)

From the result in Table 2, paper records (158, 72%), e-mail (104, 47.3%), database records (105, 47.7%), word processed documents (107, 48.6%) and internet information sources (118, 53.6%) were the major types of records created and used in the Federal ministries in Nigeria. However, voice mail files (110, 50%), graphic/Arial information (119, 54.1%), sound recordings (audio/video files) (120, 54.5%) and optical image files (125, 56.8%) were the records that were rarely created and used.

**Table 3:** Measure of Security for Records (n = 220 for RM and n=83 for IT)

Question Item	Yes	No	I don't know
Is the movement of e-records monitored or tracked in your office?	-	145 (65.9%)	75 (34.1%)
Are you aware of the official secrecy act?	35 (20%)	9 (4.1%)	176 (80%)
Are the requirements of the official secrecy act used in records management?	130 (59.1%)	49 (22.3%)	41 (18.7%)
Is there a data administrator in this ministry?	34 (41%)	19 (22.9%)	30 (36.1%)
Is there data management policy guiding the management of federal civil service data?	21 (25.3%)	33 (39.8%)	29 (34.9%)

From the results, it is revealed that shelves and cabinets (160, 73%) and flash drives were mostly used as storage devices (151, 68.6%), followed by compact disc (33, 15%) as indicated by the records management staff. The result also showed in Table 3 that majority of the respondents are neither aware of the tracking of records (145, 65.9%) nor the Official Secrecy Act (176, 80%), and the IT staff are also not aware of any data management policy guiding the management of Federal Civil Service data in the ministries (33, 39.8%). The respondents however, revealed in the result that the movement of records is monitored and tracked and that the Official Secrecy Act (130, 59.1%) is being used in the management of federal ministries' records and that there are data administrators (34, 41%) who provide security for electronic records (data).

Also, there is an off-site storage area, which serves as a record center for federal government records. This record center is under the Office of the Head of Service of the Federation. The result revealed further that the records management and the IT staffs who are involved in the management of the records have qualifications, which are not in records management. There is no designation for records management staff like data administrators in the IT staff cadre. Though staff has undergone several and diverse trainings related to records management as indicated by 149 (67.7%) respondents. Such training cannot be equated to that of a professional records manager.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper clearly stated that records are key tools for decision making and facilitating economic development, which calls for efficient and effective records management practices in federal ministries. Building adequate capacity for records managers should be given priority in Nigeria. Though records staff are presently trained in records management related issues on their job, it is not adequate. It is therefore, crucial that the government evolves an explicit strategy for capacity building on records and information management personnel in the federal ministries. There is the need to recruit professionally trained records managers to manage public records in federal ministries.

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**Full Length Research**

## **Imperatives of career Development on librarian's commitment among university libraries in southern Nigeria**

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**This study examined the imperatives of career development on librarians commitment among university libraries in southern, Nigeria. The survey design was adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from all the five hundred and fifty-six (556) professional librarians in thirty-nine public university in southern, Nigeria .five hundred and twenty four (524) were completed and retrieved for data analysis. Total enumeration method was used to include all academic librarians in the universities in Southern Nigeria. Data was analyzed with descriptive statistics. The findings showed that the extent of career development was high and that out of the five construct, training contributed highest in librarian career development while counseling offered the least contribution, although it was high. Affective commitment made the largest contribution while normative commitment offered the least contribution. Also, findings reviewed that career development significantly influenced librarians commitment at < 0.05 significant level. The study recommends that the library management creates a friendly environment and organise regular staff training to boost librarians' commitment**

**Key word:** Career development, Librarians, Librarians commitment, University libraries

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The library as an organisation acquires, organises, preserves and makes available recorded knowledge to users. The library can also be known as a collection of books and non-book materials organized and kept for reading, study, and consultation. It is an essential resource centre which no student and even staff, especially academic staff can afford to dispense with if he or she wants to achieve great academic success. For an academic library to exhibit the function of learning, teaching and research, it must ensure that both its human and material resources are well organized and headed by a librarian.

Commitment is a state whereby employees show the highest level of dedication to support in the accomplishment of the organization's objectives (Owolabi, Ajiboye, Bakare, Bello, Omotoso, & Adeleke, 2013). Commitment is a way to



know how people respond emotionally and how it can be measured through the following attributes of attitude, beliefs, behaviour which can vary from low to high. Employee commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organisation. A committed librarian is indispensable to their institution because they take their work seriously and attract more users to the library. The commitment of librarian is very pertinent for delivering services in the area of user education, documentation, and reference services. The managements of libraries can increase the commitment of librarians by giving them recognition in form of awards, sending them on training and conferences on the current trends of their professions. The focus of this current study is the employee commitment of librarians, knowing that the commitment of employee in an organization like library will help the library management to improve on absenteeism, low performance, poor execution of excellent service to library users which are factors accountable for low commitment of librarians Oyowvevotu 2018).

Commitment of librarians to their organisation could be centred on the three dimensions propounded by Meyer and Allen (1997), namely, affective, continuance and normative. These three dimensions of commitment explain the commitment of librarians. Hamidi<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad -bakhsh, Soltanian and Behzadifar (2017) defined affective commitment as a situation where an individual fully accepts the rules guiding an organisation, and becomes personally and emotionally attached to that organisation's level of achievement

Continuance commitment occurs when an employee needs to stay in an organisation. Potential antecedents of continuance commitment include age, tenure and career satisfaction (Kim, Eisenberger, & Baik, 2016). Normative commitment on the other hand is interpreted as the feeling that one ought to remain with the organization because of personal norms and values. For librarians to be well committed there is need for the development of their career,

Career refers to a particular choice of work and Development can be defined as the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced and stronger. Development as a concept is a holistic term, thus, Okoye (2008) defines development from human perspective to mean:

"a multi-faceted phenomenon, which can be manifested through the attainment of matured skill and creativity, independence, high level of personal discipline, enjoyment of rule of law and acquisition of power with commensurate responsibilities, expectations, and privileges." (p14)

This shows that development means an improvement on the existing structures as well as devising new areas of interest with higher responsibilities. Career development puts value on the employees, it will extend to the organization's value.

Perrotta (2015) defined the concept of career development as the constant enhancement of knowledge and skills, comprising job mastery and professional development. She suggested that job mastery skills are those that are needed to perform one's job successfully. The benefit of career development is for both the employee and institution, and the employee development is for future position and this will lead to the assurance of the organization having an amount of competent, dedicated employee to substitute the higher-level employ. Additionally, career development trainings allows organizations to improve and place employees in locations attuned with their different career benefits, desires, and aims. This will go a long way stimulating the employee's fulfilment and ideal use of their skills. Furthermore, in line with the above author's submission.

Career development involves the following components: career planning, coaching, counselling, mentoring, training and also the effective location of employees in positions that their needs and the needs of the organization will be met.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. ascertain the level of librarians commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria;
2. find out the extent of career development for librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria;

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1 What is the level of librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern, Nigeria?
- 2 What is the extent of career development of librarians in university libraries in Southern, Nigeria?

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0 .05% level of significance for the study

Career development has no significant influence on librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria;

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Committed employees perform better to the development of the organisation more than employees that are less committed. Zeena, et al (2018) defined commitment as away employees display a highest level of devotion to assist in the achievement of the organization's goals. Irefin, and Ali (2014) vied employee commitment as the highest level of dedication that a staff exhibits in an organization. Also in agreement, Mayowa-Adebara (2019) found that commitment is an emotional response that can be measured through people's behaviours, beliefs and attitudes. Similarly, Umar et al (2013) corroborated that, the employees of organizations whose work performance and productivity level of commitment is very high will perform better, while organizations whose employees have lower level of commitment will exhibit absence and unpunctuality. Organizational commitments consist of of three components which are affective, continuance and normative commitments. Affective commitment is a situation where an individual fully accepts the rules guiding an organisation, and becomes personally and emotionally attached to that organisations level of achievement.

Continuance commitment refers to awareness of the costs associated with leaving/quitting an organization. People with this type of commitment base their relationship with the organization on the remuneration they are getting from the organization and what they stand to lose if they leave the organization (Tutei, Koskei<sup>1</sup>, Geoffrey and Jared 2018). Continuance commitment occurs when an employee need to stay in an organisation. Potential antecedents of continuance commitment include age, tenure and career satisfaction (Kim, Eisenberger, & Baik, 2016). Normative commitment means an obligation to uninterrupted employment which implies that somebody does not resign from an organization because of the pressures enforced by the statutes of the organization. Normative commitment is measured by the individual's feeling that they have to stay with the organization.

Nitzche et al (2014) defined career development as a continuous process of work life, the author further stated that It helps people to recognise the gap that they lack in building up their skills and know how to develop it more in order to succeed through the time of change. Similarly, Anekwe, Ndubisi-okolo & Nwannah, (2020) viewed career development. as a method of providing opportunities for employee's and organization to attain high and definite goals. Kemboi (2014) did a study on the perceived effect of career development practices on employee retention at the Kenya post office savings bank. During the study it was revealed that career development processes that are being practiced in Post Bank include the following guidance and counselling, career planning, training coaching and mentoring. These are geared towards retaining of employees in the bank.

The result shows that these processes of career development is used to support policymaking, providing direction to staff on career connected rights and responsibility, development of a healthy self-concept among individual employees and improve relationship and cooperation among staff at diverse levels. In a related empirical study by Kelly (2012) career development practices among commercial Banks in Kenya. The result indicated that there are various career development practices that are obvious among commercial banks in Kenya which are- Treating career development as a core human resources function, existence of career growth information for employees, career counselling practice, integrating career growth into the appraisal process, The study made the following recommendation to employees to acquire higher education so as to upgrading skills, training program and undertaking of professional program. Foday (2014) did a similar study on perceived relationship between career development and employee retention at Deloitte Kenya. Descriptive, correlation and regression survey design was used for the study. The results shows that most of the respondents are satisfied with career planning as most of them display conformity to career planning best practices. Training and development, Coaching and mentoring, career counselling services, succession planning and talent management were found to be suitable in the study area judging by most respondents. The result also suggests that employees are satisfied and propose to stay with the firm. In contrast to this background, inferential results added that among other factors, career planning, training and development, coaching and mentoring career counselling, succession planning and talent management are key influences of employee retention at Deloitte Kenya. Indicating that these career development practices contributes to employee engagement and job retention. This will now lead to decrease in turnover and Increase productivity at Deloitte Kenya.

## METHODOLOGY

The population of this study comprised 556 professional librarians from federal and state universities in South-East, South-West and South-South geo-political zones of Nigeria with Eighteen (18) from federal universities and Twenty (22) from state university libraries. Total enumeration technique was used. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the entire population of (556) professional librarians. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation were used to determine the Imperatives of career Development on librarian' commitment

**RESULT****Table 1.** Level of librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern, Nigeria

<b>Affective Commitment</b>	<b>Very High Level</b>	<b>High Level</b>	<b>Low Level</b>	<b>Very Low Level</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percentage contributions</b>
My preference to work in this Institution over others at the time I joined is	161(30.8)	333(63.8)	10(1.9)	18(3.5)	3.22	.65	<b>35.8%</b>
The willingness to put in more effort than expected in this institution is	140.(26.8)	329(63.0)	30(5.7)	23(4.5)	3.12	.70	
My enthusiasm towards the institution is	115(22.0)	377(72.1)	11(2.1)	20(3.8)	3.12	.62	
My loyalty towards this institution is	125(23.9)	359(68.8)	10(1.9)	28(5.4)	3.11	.68	
My emotional attachment to this institution is	118(22.6)	353(67.4)	27(5.2)	25(4.8)	3.08	.68	
The tendency for me to remain in this institution, even to my disadvantage is.	83(15.9)	311(59.4)	78(14.9)	51(9.8)	2.81	.82	
<b>Group Mean = 3.08</b>							
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>							<b>32.3%</b>
Happiness about choice of job is	74(14.3)	375(72.7)	41(7.9)	26(5.0)	2.96	.65	
Benefits from staying in this organization is	68(13.1)	337(65.1)	84(16.2)	29(5.6)	2.86	.71	
My tendency of accepting any type of job assignment in order to keep working in this institution is	86(16.5)	308(59.1)	87(16.7)	40(7.7)	2.84	.79	
My aspiration to have lifetime employment if possible with the organization is	57(10.9)	338(64.9)	95(18.2)	31(6.0)	2.81	.70	
The possibility of leaving this institution even if I get a better offer is	103(19.9)	201(38.8)	189(36.5)	25(4.8)	2.74	.83	
The possibility of me spending the rest of my career in this institution is	67(12.9)	287(55.2)	127(24.4)	39(7.5)	2.73	.78	
My thought of leaving this institution for another is	58(11.2)	172(33.1)	256(49.2)	34(6.5)	2.49	.78	
<b>Group Mean = 2.78</b>							
<b>Normative Commitment</b>							<b>31.9%</b>
The obligation I have to work for the same institution	80(15.2)	381(73.2)	28(5.4)	32(6.2)	2.98	.67	
The sense of loyalty which I feel this institution deserves from me is	69(13.2)	363(69.5)	64(12.3)	26(5.0)	2.91	.67	
The necessity for me staying in this organization is	58(11.1)	371(71.2)	67(12.9)	25(4.8)	2.89	.65	
My obligation towards remaining with my current employer is	61(11.7)	358(68.7)	72(13.8)	30(5.8)	2.86	.68	
My desire to leave this institution because of the strong sense of attachment to some people here is	54(10.3)	185(36.3)	241(46.2)	39(7.2)	2.49	.78	
Negative consequences of leaving the organization is	48(9.2)	163(31.4)	251(48.4)	57(11.0)	2.39	.80	
<b>Group Mean = 2.75</b>							
<b>Job Commitment (Grand Mean=2.87)</b>							

Source: Field work from the Researcher, 2020

Decision Rule: The decision rule states that: 1.0-1.49 = Very low level of commitment; 1.50-2.49 = Low level of commitment; 2.50-3.49 = High level of commitment; 3.50-4.0 = Very High level of commitment. Criteria mean of 2.5 is calculated as follows:  $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ .

The result of Table 1 shows that the level of librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern, Nigeria was high as indicated by the grand mean score of 2.87 on a four-point Likert type scale. The results reveal the percentage, mean, standard deviations, for each item in librarian commitment. The group means and percentage contributions for each component and the grand mean for librarian commitment was calculated.

**Table 2.** Extent of career development of librarians in university libraries in southern, Nigeria.

	Very High Extent	High Extent	Low Extent	Very Low Extent	Mean	SD	Percentage contributions
<b>Training</b>							
The on-the-job training opportunity available for employee	79(13.7)	358(68.8)	54(10.4)	37(7.1)	2.89	0.72	20.2%
The rate at which the Institution allows employees to have the time to learn new skills that prepares them for future jobs.	50(9.6)	379(72.4)	67(12.8)	27(5.2)	2.86	0.62	
The opportunity for regular training on all cadres of employee to enhance their engagement	61(11.7)	356(68.1)	74(14.1)	32(6.1)	2.85	0.69	
The adequate emphasis to develop managerial capabilities through of-the-job training	56(10.8)	340(65.5)	82(15.8)	41(7.9)	2.79	0.74	
<b>Group Mean = 2.85</b>							
<b>Mentoring</b>							20.1%
Skilled professionals willingness to groom junior professionals for higher positions.	46(8.8)	380(72.7)	66(12.6)	31(5.9)	2.84	0.65	20.1%
The level of mentorship in your library.	59(11.3)	353(67.6)	78(14.9)	32(6.2)	2.84	0.70	
Junior employees' submission for grooming by senior colleagues.	54(10.4)	355(68.0)	83(15.9)	30(5.7)	2.83	0.68	
<b>Group Mean = 2.84</b>							
<b>Career Planning</b>							20.1%
The rate of career growth for staff in the Organization	45(8.6)	376(72.0)	78(14.9)	23(4.4)	2.85	0.62	20.1%
The extent of career planning for staff of the Organization.	56(10.7)	344(65.8)	100(19.1)	23(4.4)	2.83	0.67	
Discussion of career plan with staff before decisions are taken on what is appropriate.	74(14.2)	316(60.8)	93(17.9)	37(7.1)	2.82	0.76	
<b>Group Mean = 2.83</b>							
<b>Coaching</b>							20.1%
Developing staff for future positions in an organization.	57(10.9)	373(71.5)	70(13.4)	22(4.2)	2.89	0.63	20.1%
The Organizational adaptation of formal discussions about career development among its employees	36(6.9)	377(72.5)	84(16.2)	23(4.4)	2.82	0.61	
Recognition of employees interests/goals by Organizations	48(9.2)	344(65.9)	98(18.8)	32(6.1)	2.78	0.69	

**Table 2. Continuation**

<b>Group Mean = 2.83</b>							
<b>Counseling</b>							<b>19.5%</b>
The extent of career the Organization prepares forecast for each employee.	53(10.1)	335(64.1)	107(20.5)	28(5.3)	2.79	0.69	
The rate at which Organization provides guidance to staff on career related rights and obligation in the staff hand book.	47(9.0)	345(66.0)	101(19.3)	30(5.7)	2.78	0.68	
Provision of career counseling and Planning assistance to employees by My Institution.	52(9.9)	305(58.3)	141(27.0)	25(4.8)	2.73	0.70	
The procedure the Organization uses to dedicate formal sessions for discussing career Development of each staff.	42(8.1)	311(59.7)	140(26.9)	28(5.3)	2.70	0.69	
<b>Group Mean = 2.75</b>							
<b>Career Development (Grand Mean=2.82)</b>							

Source: Field work from the Researcher, 2020

Decision Rule: The decision rule states that: 1.0-1.49 = Very low extent of career development; 1.50-2.49 = Low extent of career development; 2.50-3.49 = High extent of career development; 3.50-4.0 = Very high extent of career development. Criteria mean of 2.5 is calculated as follows:  $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ .

According to the result of Table 2 the extent of librarians' career development in university libraries in Southern Nigeria, was high, based on the decision rule on the mean score of 2.95. The result signifies that librarians in university libraries of Southern, Nigeria has a high career development on their job.

**Table 3:** Multiple linear regression analysis of influence of career development (indicators) on librarians' commitment

Predictors	Model 7	B	T	Sig.	Collinearity statistics		R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	ANOV A (Sig.)
					Tolerance	VIF				
(Constant)	2.055		25.843	.000			0.223	0.215	29.589	0.000
Career planning	.061	.104	1.581	.115	.347	2.880				
Counselling	.006	.010	.150	.881	.356	2.811				
Mentoring	.154	.254	4.071	.000	.387	2.583				
Coaching	.060	.096	1.337	.182	.293	3.408				
Training	.046	.071	1.179	.239	.412	2.426				
Dependent Variable: Librarians' commitment										
Predictors: (Constant), Career planning, Counselling, Mentoring, Coaching, Training										
DF (F-Statistic) = 5, 516										
DF (T-Statistic) = 515										

Source: Field Survey Results, 2019

Table 3 presents the results of multiple linear regression analysis result for the influence of career development (indicators) on librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. None of the career development (indicators) in the multiple linear regression indicate multicollinearity issues since their tolerance values were greater than 0.1 and VIF was less than 10. Therefore, all the career development (indicators) were used in the multiple linear regression model. According to the result revealed in Table 4.7a, mentoring ( $\beta = 0.254$ ,  $t(515) = 4.071$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) has small, positive and significant influence on librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. On the other hand, career planning ( $\beta = 0.104$ ,  $t(515) = 1.581$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), counselling ( $\beta = 0.010$ ,  $t(515) = 0.150$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), coaching ( $\beta = 0.096$ ,  $t(515) = 1.337$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), and training ( $\beta = 0.071$ ,  $t(515) = 1.179$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) had insignificant influences on librarians' commitment. The result shows that mentoring is the only contributor to librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION

Research question one was formulated to establish the level of librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. Findings in Table 1 reveal high level of job commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. Affective job

commitment contributed the highest in job commitment while normative job commitment offered the least contribution. From this result, it implies that librarians are committed to their jobs. Therefore, library management should give credence to Librarians' job commitment dimensions captured in this study. Several empirical, conceptual and theoretical literature reviewed in the study corroborates this finding. For instance the finding is also consistent with that of Zeena, et al (2018) who defined commitment as away employees display a highest level of devotion to assist in the achievement of the organization's goals. The finding also corroborates Irefin, and Ali (2014) who found that the level of employee commitment of the staff of the company was very high. Also in agreement, Mayowa-Adebara (2019) found that commitment is an emotional response that can be measured through people's behaviours, beliefs and attitudes. Similarly, the finding of Umar et al (2013) corroborated that, the employees of organizations whose work performance and productivity level of commitment is very high will perform better, while organizations whose employees have lower level of commitment will exhibit absenteeism and lateness.

Research question two was formulated to probe into the extent of career development of librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The question arose from the assumption that career development is needed to enhance job commitment of librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. Findings in Table 2 reveal high level of career development in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. From the constructs measured, the table indicated that respondents rated on a high extent: training, mentoring, career planning, coaching and counseling. Training contributed highest to job commitment while counseling offered the least contribution to job commitment.

This result provides insight into ways to facilitate better career development for librarians by paying attention to all the constructs captured in the study. Several empirical, conceptual and theoretical literature reviewed in the study corroborates this finding. This finding is also consistent with several other findings such as The work of Kemboi (2014) on the perceived effect of career development practices on employee retention revealed that career development processes that are being practiced in Post Bank include guidance and counselling, career planning, training, coaching and mentoring rated high level. The finding also agrees with the empirical review of Kelly (2012) who studied career development practices among commercial Banks and discovered that there are various career development practices that are obvious among commercial banks namely treating career development as a core human resources function, existence of career growth information for employees, career counselling practice and integrating career growth into the appraisal process. Likewise, Foday (2014) reported similar finding on perceived relationship between career development and employee retention. The result also suggests that employees are satisfied with career planning, training and development, coaching and mentoring career counselling, succession planning and talent management.

Hypothesis two which states that career development has no significant influence on librarians' commitment in university libraries in Southern Nigeria was formulated to ascertain the influence of career development on librarians' commitment. Findings revealed that career development has a significant influence on librarians' commitment in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The null hypothesis was thus rejected. This result suggests that librarians who have been through career development on the job have strong tendencies to commit to their jobs. Several literature reviewed corroborates this finding. For instance, the empirical report of Muma, Iravo & Omondi (2014) on the effect of training needs assessment on employee commitment indicated that training had an influence on employee commitment. Likewise the finding supports that of Dome, Kemboi & Kapkial (2017) who discovered that affective commitment positively influenced employee performance while training partially moderated the relationship between employee affective commitment and performance. The study was also consistent with Younis, Aame & Naseeb (2013) who investigated on career development and organizational commitment using four key parts of the human resource strategies namely planning, training and development, pay and reward and organizational commitment was what the researcher based the study. The result of the findings indicates that there is a significance influence of career development on organizational commitment. In the report of Ahmadi, et al (2018), librarians considered their career goals as important and valuable, successfully performed their assigned tasks, had a sense of belonging and commitment to organization, and enjoyed from their membership, a situation similar to this study. This situation was also evident in the empirical effort of Ekit (2012) who concludes that the bishop Stuart University use various motivational tools in appealing to its employees in order to maintain employees to employer's relationship, to help employees solve their problems and to encourage team work as well as improve on the employees confidence at their workplace to perform better for improved organizational employee performance. The finding is inconsistent with Ngetunyi (2013) who

discovered that the main challenges faced by female employees in career development were education and training, lack of mentors, lack of access to informal networks and gender based discrimination

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

For an organisation to sustain his/her valuable employees, there is need for their career to be highly developed through training as one of the components of career development and as the construct that contributed more than others is highly needed to create commitment among librarians. Academic libraries be aware of the dynamic nature of the environment were they are situated which calls for them to be preemptive, advanced and receptive consequently, this study recommends that the management of academic libraries in southern, Nigeria.

- 1 creates a friendly environment to boost librarians' commitment;
- 2 should organise regular staff training to enhance librarian's commitment.

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**Full Length Research**

# Knowledge Sharing and Service Delivery of Librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

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The proliferation of information and communication technology has had a significant influence on knowledge sharing practices and service delivery in organizations. This has raised the consciousness of libraries to exchange of knowledge and to improve library services. Survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of all 196 librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Total enumeration was used for the study. A self-structured questionnaire. Findings revealed librarians mostly use brainstorming and verbal discussions for knowledge sharing among other knowledge sharing practices, which implied that knowledge sharing practices of librarians were low. Also, the services provided by librarians were e-reference services, database search, online user education and e-reader services among other available library services. The study recommended that knowledge sharing practices such as mentoring, community of practices, staff meetings and storytelling that were scarcely used to share knowledge should be encouraged in the library. Also librarians should promote e-library services such as e-current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, instant messaging services and distance learning services

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing practices, Service delivery, Librarians, University library

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## INTRODUCTION

Knowledge sharing is a new concept and has not been fully integrated in libraries. Today, libraries are becoming more conversant with the benefits of knowledge sharing practices and creating avenues to introduce knowledge sharing in the library, citing reference to Moshia, Holmner and Penzhorn (2015) who conducted a study on the librarians of Nelson Mandela University and found that knowledge sharing practices in the library is low. In Malaysia, the case is the same with reference to Chong (2003) whose findings showed that libraries have not fully implemented knowledge sharing except few government bodies who only use face to face interaction to share knowledge.

The contemporary society has developed huge interest in the area of knowledge due to its benefits to the society and organizations. It is all about bringing and getting knowledge, where individuals learn from experiences from each other

through the knowledge shared. On the other hand, the library profession has attempted to identify the means by which librarians can promote knowledge sharing practices among librarians through the use of social media. Knowledge sharing in a social media environment is important among librarians because it gives librarians unique ideas on how to serve the patrons better. Knowledge sharing practices brings out the best from librarians because shared understanding is a driving force for the growth of any organisation. The value of knowledge is viewed in two different ways; knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. Once knowledge is created, it can be used by others for different purposes and once knowledge is shared, new knowledge is created (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Knowledge creation is achieved using social media through the communication process.

Knowledge is important in organisations because it gives organisations its uniqueness and also makes the organisation outsmart its competitors. Knowledge sharing practices, according to Lam (2000), is influenced by the two broad categories of knowledge which are tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is obtained through experiences and tacit knowledge is difficult to articulate while explicit knowledge is documented knowledge obtained through formal learning. Knowledge sharing is a key concept associated with the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge which results in the transfer of knowledge from one individual to another.

Effective knowledge sharing boosts an organisational intellectual capital which is the most important asset of an organisation. MacAdam (1998) noted that knowledge sharing is an essential part of libraries because libraries play a key role in knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is achieved in the library when technical and systematic infrastructure is put in place (Seonghee & Boryung, 2008). Harinarayana and Raju (2010) opined that libraries use social media to provide organized resources, arouse user participation and engage in the act of knowledge sharing. Furthermore, librarians can use social media to stimulate users in creating new library services by contributing their knowledge online (Casey & Savastinuk, 2010).

The rate at which knowledge is shared on social media is overwhelming. The use of ICT has made it easy for knowledge to be shared and received by users on social media platform. The library professionals are not left out; one will attest to the fact that even if a library does not create its social media platform, librarians still visit social media sites for their personal interest. Quinn, Anderson and Finkelstein (1996) noted that the challenge to sharing of knowledge by professionals to their peers is insecurity because professionals view their knowledge as most precious asset in their possession which should be guarded jealously. Knowledge sharing practices in organisations have a positive effect on service delivery by offering new ways of promoting organisational values.

Libraries today are embarking on new ways to enhance service provision to the users and knowledge sharing practices have the potentials of improving library services using information communication technology. Libraries are becoming more relevant by providing electronic library services to support the physical library. Technology has taken over the world of communication and libraries are taking the opportunity to reach out to users in the electronic environment. Meyega (2008) defined service delivery as a process of making information resources available through library facilities and procedures for onsite use, circulation and inter library loans. Service delivery is also a means that defines the interaction between providers and clients, where the provider offers a service that can be information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses value in the service offered (Tetra, 2015).

A library is expected to provide accessible services to its users. Librarians are required to provide services to satisfy the information needs of the user community. Libraries provide a broad range of services depending on the type of library. There are services peculiar to all libraries such as reference service, current awareness services lending services, interlibrary loans and document delivery, literature search, selective dissemination of information, outreach services and so on (Aina, 2004). A library also provides services such as the organization of information and analyses of information needs of users. Meyega (2008) categorized library services into user services and technical services. User services include: circulation, bibliographic instructions, government documentation, special collection and reference services while technical services include: acquisition, cataloguing, classification, interlibrary loan, serial systems and document delivery.

Literature has established that the provision of a technology enhanced library services is low in most libraries, citing reference to Akpoiroro and Okon (2015) in a study on students' satisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in South-South, Nigeria, revealed that students satisfaction with library services were low due to inadequate information technology facilities in the institution. Mishra (2008) noted that today's users are anxious in getting handy electronic information resources to meet their needs and the ability to make available speedy and easy retrieval of information resources poses a challenge to library professionals. The traditional library is evolving to the electronic library. The electronic library services are important because it gives libraries the room to attend to users in the global community. Electronic library services commonly used on the Internet and the World Wide Web include; computerized library catalogs, electronic databases, instant messaging services, distance learning services, virtual references and interlibrary loans.

Libraries in this information age offer services in physical and electronic formats. Librarians are extending services beyond the physical walls of a building by shifting from the physical library to the electronic/virtual environment. Libraries

in the technology era provide services via the virtual library and also through the Internet. In order for libraries to remain significant towards the provision of quality services; social media is a tool that can assist libraries to meet up with the challenging needs of users in this contemporary society (Meyega, 2008). The findings of the study conducted by Ikonne, Onuoha and Madukoma (2013) on marketing of information services in the social media framework of communication showed that promoting library services is a means of preparing the library to face the technology transformed world. The study revealed that the use of some social media tools is easy and cost effective. The study concluded that using social media for service delivery will make libraries more interesting in the area of library acquisition, organisation and dissemination of library services.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The potentials of knowledge sharing practices and technology enhanced service delivery in organizations have raised the consciousness of libraries to adopt technology channels to improve library services in order to meet up with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century users. Studies has revealed that knowledge sharing practices are not fully integrated in most libraries and knowledge sharing brings about innovation and creativity in organizations. On the other hand, there seems to be low provision of a technology enhanced library services in most libraries' which will improve the service delivery of users in this challenging digital environment. As a result of the importance of knowledge sharing and technology enhanced library services in organizations, there is an increase in the number of libraries that are adopting and implementing the use of social media for knowledge sharing and service delivery advantageously. Despite the awareness of the potency of knowledge sharing on service delivery, it is not certain the extent to which knowledge sharing practices is used to improve library services in libraries in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Therefore, this study investigated knowledge sharing practices and service delivery by librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which librarians are share their knowledge on service delivery in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The specific objectives are to:

1. ascertain the knowledge sharing practices among librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria;
2. ascertain the types of service delivery of librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

## **Research Questions**

1. what are the knowledge sharing practices of librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
2. what are the types of librarians' service delivery in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Knowledge Sharing Practices**

Knowledge is considered as an intangible asset of an organisation. Henry (2004) noted that the economy today recognizes knowledge as a driving force for economic and social development. The contemporary society has developed huge interest in the area of knowledge due to its benefits to the society and organizations. American heritage dictionary (1992) defined knowledge as "familiarity, awareness, or understanding gained through experience or study" (p. 2). Knowledge is a gift stored in people's heads and unshared knowledge is not power rather knowledge sharing is power.

Knowledge as a concept results from a progression of data, information to knowledge. Data is a foreigner, unprocessed information, information is data analyzed while knowledge is the application of information, then knowledge sharing is the point when knowledge acquired is exchanged from one person to another for effective productivity in the organisation. It is also a process of coordinating learning activities, exchange of knowledge and creation of new knowledge among individuals (Hooff & De Ridder, 2004). Knowledge sharing is a facet of knowledge management and knowledge management according to Ismail and Yusof (2010) is the "process of identifying, organising and managing knowledge resources" (p. 2). This means that KM aims at collecting, locating and gathering, organising, analysing, sharing, dissemination and use of knowledge assets for competitive advantage.

According to Latupapua (2016), knowledge sharing practices are diverse personal interactive processes such as discussions, debates and meetings where one is influenced by others experiences. It is also the act of explaining an idea or an experience among employees in an organization (Kharabsheh, 2007). Knowledge sharing practices is influenced by the nature of knowledge, individuals and the organization. Tacit knowledge is the type of knowledge obtained during knowledge sharing practices such as imitation, observation, apprenticeship and mentoring. Knowledge sharing can only be achieved when employees are willing to share their knowledge and organizations are ready to create an enabling environment for knowledge sharing practices. Similarly, Wu and Sukoco (2010) in a study to investigate why people share knowledge on the electronic media showed that knowledge sharing practices enhances one's professional reputation and one's social capital and the willingness to share knowledge in an organisation depends on the trustworthiness of the employees.

O'Brien (1996) and Dadzie, (2005) are of the opinion that information is important when it is relevant for its purpose, accurate, delivered timely, current, complete and cost effective. This is applicable to knowledge as well. If knowledge is shared when it is needed in the library, it leads to quality productivity and social media can be used to achieve it. Knowledge sharing and information sharing has been used interchangeably by information scholars who have the notion that they are the same. Wilson (2002) argued that knowledge cannot be managed, that only the environment of knowledge can be managed. Information can be managed but it is impossible to manage knowledge. Knowledge sharing in organisation aids decision making. Choo and Lee (2002) asserted that technology is a tool that supports knowledge sharing and its management in organisations. Ward and Arumen (2004) opined that in order to understand knowledge sharing, one needs to study the knowledge lifecycle that explains how knowledge is created, acquired, identified, adapted, organised, distributed/ shared and utilized for organisational growth.

Scholars have categorized knowledge into two types, explicit and tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). Tacit knowledge is a type of knowledge stored in people's heads. It is an intangible knowledge that gives organisations its competitive edge. Tacit knowledge is difficult to communicate which is embedded in actions and observation (Cummings, 2003). Tacit knowledge is uncodified knowledge acquired through socialization, apprenticeship, learning on the job, community of practice (COP) and seminars. Explicit on the other hand is a codified or documented knowledge. It forms the bedrock of every organisation. It is knowledge stored in organisational repository. Explicit knowledge is handy and can be retrieved at any time when the need arises. The relationship between explicit and tacit is that, when tacit knowledge is shared and documented, it becomes explicit. It is worthy to note that both tacit and explicit knowledge are important in the organisation for efficiency and productivity.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have identified that knowledge sharing is a key concept associated with the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge which results in the transfer of knowledge from one individual to another. Elliot (as cited in Dataware Technologies, 1998), says that knowledge management encourages knowledge sharing, the more and effectively knowledge is shared, the more there is an increase in products and services which enhances employee performance and organisational growth. Junnarkar (1997) added that knowledge sharing is stimulated by connecting people with people and also by the interrelationship between individuals who share knowledge that is understood by the people involved in the growth of the organisation. Effective knowledge sharing boosts an organisational intellectual capital which is the most important asset of an organisation (Smith, 2008).

Knowledge organisations can increase their performance through knowledge exchange and knowledge organisations view knowledge as a state of mind of individual learning and also an act of knowledge exchange between individual and groups of individuals in an organisation (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Knowledge sharing as an aspect of knowledge management seeks to build and transfer knowledge by enhancing knowledge sharing practices, providing knowledge infrastructure thereby making knowledge available for use in the organisation (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Von Krogh, Nonaka and Aben (2001) noted that that competitive advantage and superior profitability is attained in organisations that effectively create and share knowledge. Knowledge sharing is rooted in human behaviour, making people the driving force behind knowledge management, also knowledge management lies on the ability of people to share and reuse knowledge.

Yang, (2004) noted that an organisation's collaborative learning among participants enhance knowledge sharing which is achieved through interaction among individuals. Knowledge sharing is efficient when individuals share the knowledge in their heads with others in the organisation, if individual knowledge is not shared; the effect of knowledge sharing is limited. Therefore, in order to use social media for effective service delivery, librarians must share their knowledge. Knowledge sharing is achieved in an organisation with sound organisational culture. McDermott and O'Dell (2001) defined organisational culture as "the shared values, beliefs and practices of the people in the organisation" (p. 77). Therefore, an organisation must create an enabling environment that will encourage knowledge sharing.

## Service Delivery in Libraries

Studies have shown that knowledge sharing practices in organisations have a positive effect on service delivery by offering new ways of promoting organisational values. Libraries today are embarking on new ways to enhance service provision to the users and knowledge sharing practices have the potentials of improving library services using information communication technology. The library as an organization is a collection of information resources with the specific purpose of obtaining, preserving and making available recorded knowledge. Tetra (2015) defined service delivery as a means that defines the interaction between providers and users, where the provider offers a service that can be information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses value in the service offered. Quality service delivery in the library provides users with the satisfaction of their information needs.

Libraries provide a broad range of services depending on the type of library. There are services peculiar to all libraries such as reference service, current awareness services lending services, interlibrary loans and document delivery, literature search, selective dissemination of information, outreach services, etc (Aina, 2004). A library cannot function without providing services to the patrons. Services delivery is an indispensable part of every library and librarians are used to deliver library services to the patrons (Maponya, 2004). The primary purpose of the library is to collect, process, store, disseminate and use information resources for the provision of library services. Libraries are expected to make use of information resources and knowledge efficiently to satisfy their patron needs. By so doing, it will transform libraries into learning organisations. Libraries offer reference services for research purposes by collecting information resources from diverse fields and social media can assist libraries to showcase these services to library patrons (Lekay, 2012). Mishra (2008) noted that today's users are interested in getting handy electronic information resources to satisfy their needs and the ability to make available speedy and easy retrieval of information resources poses a challenge to library professionals.

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is obvious that libraries are gradually shifting from the physical library to the electronic/ virtual environment, in order for libraries to remain significant towards the provision of quality services; social media is a tool that can assist libraries to meet up with the challenging needs of patrons in this contemporary society. A Library does not provide materials alone; it also provides services such as the organization of information and also analyses of information needs of users. Libraries in this information age provide unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources. Libraries are extending services beyond the physical walls of a building, by providing access to electronic resources via the virtual library and also through the internet. Libraries can achieve the provision of these services through computer mediated tool such as social media to enhance knowledge sharing activities and collaboration between the service providers (Meyega, 2008).

In every organisation, there must be change resisters as research has shown that people are not always ready to accept change, but the technology driven society is forcing organisations to accept change because of ICT contributions to the society as well as the library. In order to support this, O'Brien (1996) asserted that today's patrons face a huge challenge from those in the past in their enthusiasm to explore the technology world as they experiment with cell phones, computers and the internet.

## METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was adopted for this study. Survey design is considered appropriate because it would give the opportunity to gather responses from a large number of respondents in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The population of this study consisted of all librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. There are 196 librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (University Administration's Office 2019). The sample size for this study was 196 respondents, considering the manageable population size, all members of the population was used. Therefore, total enumeration was used for the study. Self-structured questionnaire was designed by the researcher in order to provide responses from librarians. The questionnaire was closed-ended questions. A total number of 196 copies of the questionnaire were administered to librarians. The data for this study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were analyzed carefully using frequency distribution, simple percentage scores, mean, and standard deviation.

### **Research Question One: What are the knowledge sharing practices of librarians in tertiary institutions in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?**

**Table 1.** Presents information on the knowledge sharing practices of librarians such as; brainstorming, verbal discussion, seminars/workshops, mentoring, staff meetings, community of practices and storytelling.

**Table 1.** Knowledge sharing practices in the library

S/N	I use the following knowledge sharing methods such as....	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
		F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)		
1.	Brainstorming	6(2.9)	2(1.0)	6(2.9)	50(24.5)	140(68.6)	4.55	.850
2.	Verbal discussion	6(2.9)	2(1.0)	6(2.9)	52(25.5)	138(67.6)	4.54	.850
3.	Seminars/Workshops	6(2.9)	2(1.0)	28(13.7)	62(30.4)	106(52)	4.27	.943
4.	Mentoring	8(3.9)	18(8.8)	60(29.4)	68(33.3)	50(24.5)	3.66	1.064
5.	Staff meetings	10(4.9)	43(21.1)	42(20.6)	47(23)	62(30.4)	3.53	1.257
6.	Community of practice	32(15.7)	72(35.3)	57(27.9)	27(13.2)	16(7.8)	2.62	1.136
7.	Storytelling	28(13.7)	77(37.7)	68(33.3)	14(6.9)	17(8.3)	2.58	1.077
	<b>I share knowledge on...</b>							
8.	Database search	6(2.9)	0	4(2.0)	72(35.3)	122(59.8)	4.49	.803
9.	Cataloguing /Classification	8(3.9)	0	10(4.9)	87(42.6)	99(48.5)	4.32	.889
10.	Reference services	10(4.9)	0	8(3.9)	85(41.7)	101(49.5)	4.31	.940
11.	User education	6(2.9)	0	22(10.8)	74(36.3)	102(50)	4.30	.885
12.	library marketing through social media	10(4.9)	8(3.9)	12(5.9)	63(30.9)	111(54.4)	4.26	1.067
13.	Current awareness services	6(2.9)	2(1.0)	26(12.7)	80(39.2)	90(44.1)	4.21	.913
14.	Library automation	10(4.9)	1(0.5)	16(7.8)	86(42.2)	91(44.6)	4.21	.972
15.	Reader services	10(4.9)	6(2.9)	14(6.9)	87(42.6)	87(42.6)	4.15	1.018
16.	Acquisition of library materials	6(2.9)	22(10.8)	24(11.8)	84(41.2)	68(33.3)	3.91	1.070
17.	Library policies	8(3.9)	22(10.8)	33(16.2)	94(46.1)	47(23)	3.74	1.054
18.	Selective dissemination of information	10(4.9)	16(7.8)	62(30.4)	68(33.3)	48(23.5)	3.63	1.078
19.	Interlibrary loan services	6(2.9)	75(36.8)	43(21.1)	36(17.6)	44(21.6)	3.18	1.224

Table 1. shows that the respondents strongly agreed that librarians use brainstorming (Mean=4.55, SD=.850) and verbal discussion (Mean=4.54, SD=.850) while sharing knowledge on database search (Mean=4.49, SD=.803), cataloguing/classification (Mean=4.32, SD=.889), reference services (Mean=4.31, SD=.940), user education (Mean=4.30, SD=.885), library marketing through social media (Mean=4.26, SD=1.067), current awareness services (Mean=4.21, SD=.913), library automation (Mean=4.21, SD=.972) and reader services (Mean=4.15, SD=1.018), followed by librarians who agreed that they use seminars/workshops (Mean=4.27, SD=.943), mentoring (Mean=3.66, SD=1.064) and staff meeting (Mean=3.53, SD=1.257) as knowledge sharing methods.

#### **Research Question two: What are the types of librarians' service delivery in tertiary institutions in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?**

Table 2. presents information on the types of library services available in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, which includes; e-reference services, database search, online user education, e-reader services, e-current awareness services, distance learning services, instant messaging services, online interlibrary loans and selective dissemination of information.

**Table 2.** Types of Library Services

S/N	Types of Library Services	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
		F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)		
1.	E-reference services	6(2.9)		19(9.3)	76(37.3)	103(50.5)	4.32	.873
2.	Database search	10(4.9)	2(1.0)	10(4.9)	79(38.7)	103(50.5)	4.29	.977
3.	Online user education	8(3.9)	4(2.0)	8(3.9)	115(56.4)	69(33.8)	4.14	.890
4.	E- Reader services	10(4.9)	9(4.4)	20(9.8)	86(42.2)	79(38.7)	4.05	1.051
5.	E-current awareness services	12(5.9)	8(3.9)	29(14.2)	85(41.7)	70(34.3)	3.95	1.084
6.	Selective dissemination of information	16(7.8)	19(9.3)	55(27)	66(32.4)	48(23.5)	3.54	1.176
7.	Instant messaging services	10(4.9)	65(31.9)	57(27.9)	21(10.3)	51(25)	3.19	1.261
8.	Online Interlibrary loans,	16(7.8)	47(23)	62(30.4)	51(25)	28(13.7)	3.14	1.154
9.	Distance learning services	28(13.7)	54(26.5)	44(21.6)	17(8.3)	61(29.9)	3.14	1.443

Table 2 shows the types of library services rendered by Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The respondents agreed that libraries in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria provide e-reference services (Mean=4.32, SD=.873), database search (Mean=4.29, SD=.977), online user education (Mean=4.14, SD=.890) and e-reader services (Mean=4.05, SD=1.051) while respondents were neutral on tertiary institution libraries' provision of instant messaging services (Mean=3.19, SD=1.261), online interlibrary loans (Mean=3.14, SD=1.154) and distance learning services (Mean=3.14, SD=1.443).

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings on knowledge sharing practices of librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria indicated that the respondents strongly agreed that librarians use brainstorming and verbal discussion while sharing knowledge on database search, cataloguing/classification, reference services, user education, library marketing through social media, current awareness services, library automation and reader services, followed by librarians who agreed that librarians use seminars/workshops, mentoring and staff meeting as knowledge sharing methods. The result showed that there is a limitation in the use of knowledge sharing practices which necessitates the need for librarians to develop other methods of knowledge sharing such as community of practice and storytelling. The Library as an organization, through knowledge sharing can accelerate the process of knowledge creation and reuse of knowledge through more than the knowledge sharing methods indicated by the sampled librarians so as to move its services forward in this technology advanced age.

On the contrary, Bakare, Chiemenem, Bamigboye and Okonedo (2015), in a study on social media tools as medium for knowledge sharing found that librarians who are among the staff of Federal University of Agriculture in Ogun State neither use social media tools for knowledge sharing nor service delivery in the library. They only use social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wiki, and so on for their personal social communication. In the same vein, Onifade (2015) in a study on knowledge sharing in Nigeria showed that Nigerian librarians in Federal Universities have a positive perception on knowledge sharing. The study also revealed that regardless of Nigerian libraries having a positive perception on knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing practices is still very low among the staff of Federal University of Agriculture in Ogun State.

The result on the types of service delivery revealed that libraries in tertiary institutions in Lagos State provide e-reference services, database search, online user education and e-reader services to users, while other respondents were neutral on the libraries' provision of instant messaging services, online interlibrary loans and distance learning services. Similarly, Landis (2010) found that subject guides instructions, acquisition suggestions, catalogue/database searches, chat services, references, discussion, online book clubs and reader advisory can be promoted on social media. On the other hand, Tripathi and Kumar (2010) found that list of new books, library news and events, a list of e-journals, e-resource databases, announcements about workshops and exhibitions, help for catalogue search, research tips, book reviews/discussions and reference services can be promoted on social media.

The findings of the study on the types of library services revealed that the online service delivery is moderately low in tertiary institutions in Lagos State because the respondents only agreed to the provision of a few online library services when there are other online services such as selective dissemination of information, instant messaging services, online

interlibrary loans and distance learning services that can be provided online to the library community. This is similar to the findings of Hamad, Tbaishat and Al-Fadel (2016) on the role of social networks in enhancing the library profession and promotion of library services revealed that librarians in Jordan and Al-Balqaa' Applied University use social media tools extensively for professional development but in terms of using social media for the promotion of library services, the result indicated to be low. Similarly, Akpoiroro and Okon (2015) in a study on students' satisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in South-South, Nigeria, revealed that students satisfaction with library services were low due to inadequate information technology facilities in the institution.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study revealed that knowledge sharing practices was a significant independent predictor of service delivery of librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Librarians in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria use brainstorming and verbal discussion while sharing knowledge on database search, cataloguing/classification, reference services, user education, library marketing through social media, current awareness services, library automation and reader services. They also provide e-reference services, database search, online user education and e-reader services to users.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Knowledge sharing practices such as mentoring, community of practices, staff meetings and storytelling which were not fully used to share knowledge by librarians should be encouraged in the library.
2. Librarians should be encouraged to promote library services such as; e-current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, instant messaging services and distance learning services which were moderately promoted in the library.
3. Librarians should be given adequate exposure and training to be equipped with the knowledge and skills on the use of social media tools in order to share knowledge that will improve service delivery in the library.

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**Full Length Research**

# Information as Tool for Rural Development: Roles of Information Professionals.

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**This paper discusses information; its usefulness, channels and roles in the development of the rural communities, and the need for it to be adequately and widely disseminated to all segments of the rural society. In other words, the universality of the need for information and hence, its dissemination, regardless of whether one is an illiterate, semi-illiterate or stack illiterate person is stressed. The role of the popular channels of information dissemination such as the Radio, Television, GSM, and other traditional outlets are critically examined against the backdrop of the peculiarities that constitute the lots of the rural persons. The role of librarians as information professionals that could greatly complement those of the other mass-media in the task of proper and adequate dissemination of appropriately needed information to this undeniably indispensable but often neglected segment of our society receives its due attention in the paper. Also mention is the position/part the government is supposed to play. The study recommends that in-order to improve the access to information services in rural areas, it is imperative to deal with both individual and institutional factors such as library/media centers, lack of communication facilities/channels, poor educational facilities, lack of electricity, poor funding, lack of good road network, lack of hospital facilities, lack pipe born water etc, which limit access to information. It is also imperative to conduct audience research often so that appropriate information can be delivered to the right people.**

**Keywords:** Information, channels, tool, rural development, roles, information professionals.

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## INTRODUCTION

Information is difficult to describe because it means different things to different people. But then, information is a processed data capable of solving human's problems. Every human being needs information for advancement and awareness of what is happening around him. Information as a critical resource is indispensable for rural development without which they will stagnate. It plays important role in decision making thus making it the lifeblood of any society and vital for successful developmental activities. The type of information needed for decision making may vary from one person to another. Scholars identify that the type of information needed relate much to the day to day activities a person is involved in, the geographical location of the information seeker, level of education, age, sex, field of study, profession, career stage, and size of business operation an individual has. Individual information needs determine the types of information services to be provided and the sources to be consulted (Anunobi, Ogbonna, & Osuchukwu, 2014). They maintained that in rural areas, information needs arise from the day to day activities rural people involve themselves in.

Information needs of rural communities can be categorized into health; agricultural; educational; housing; employment; transportation; religion, welfare, family; and legal information. Other information needed may relate to crime and safety, policies/ government, land and human rights. Moreover, rural people need information on markets, health, civics, agricultural and rural development etc. Rural development aims at promoting, maintaining and supporting community actions/activates with the aids of viable information deliveries. Successful community development involves redistribution and mobilizing layers of resources already present in the community. Thus, sustainable rural development is attributed to the extent in which a given community has access to information. Information plays a vital role in the development of any nation whether developed or undeveloped.

Sadly, major setbacks of undeveloped community in developing country such as Nigeria range from lack of information communication, communication gaps, poor infrastructures ( bad road, no telecommunication network , poor water supply, epileptic electricity supply etc) poor health facilities, poor educational facilities, and inadequate access to information (Obidike,2011). She laments that many rural communities the world over including Nigeria lack access to basic needs of life, starting from good accommodation, sanitary environment, information about government functions, security etc, which culminate in poor development and poor community life. One of the solutions she proffers to alleviate rural development is the need for easy access to information.

Dutta (2013) depicts that easy and unlimited access to information will ensure that knowledge, awareness on topical issues such as innovations on technologies (ICTs) are brought to the door steps of the rural communities for improved life and development. Obidike (2011) is of the opinion that the least expensive input for rural development is knowledge. Knowledge comes from information and one cannot get adequate knowledge without proper information. Information as a critical resource is indispensable for national development without which a nation will stagnate, remains unproductive or even resort to poor living standard (Reitz, 2014). Okpa-Iroha (1999) in his wisdom, refers to information as the fourth estate of the realm, a critical resource for development which in the highly processed form, called knowledge is on equal footing with manpower and natural resources such as coal, gas, oil and gold etc. Information is now used to measure the wealth of nations and her GPA. Today information rich nations are economically wealthy, while reverse is the case for developing nations. Harrande (2013) states that the prosperity, progress or development of any nation depends upon its ability to acquire, produce, access and use pertinent information because today, information is a change agent, a reinforcement of ideas and transformer of societies. Information is the lifeblood of any society and vital to the activities of both the government and rural sectors.

Bello (2009) holds the view that "the dependence upon information to create innovation and change, places a high premium on the ability of nations to access and use information to create advances in society". It is a fact that development of countries globally cannot be achieved without the development of the rural community. To Bello, rural development can be said to be a key prerequisite for measuring a country's development. This underscores the reason why rural communities should be adequately informed to move with their counterpart in urban center. He conclude that 75 to 80% of the people in developing countries of Africa who live in the rural areas need positive, relevant and prompt attention in their daily activities which relevant information can address. In conformity with the above assertion, Dangodhyay et. al. (2012) discussing Indians experience, maintains that information has great significance for a country like India where majority of the population, about 65% of the people, live in rural areas. He concludes that the present strategy of rural development in India mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment. His article titled "Overviews the role and function of the Government and its' programmes for rural development in India", stresses that the Indian government realizes the importance of information which made them to build public libraries in the rural areas.

Nyangani ( n. d. ) in his contribution on the African nations, depicts that the pattern in African countries such as Botswana, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Zimbabwe is that population is mostly in rural areas. He emphasizes that since great number of people reside in rural areas, information services must, therefore, be placed on rural areas where the people can access them. Although, he complained that population dispersion is a problem in supplying information, but suggested that every community should have, a point where people converge for various economic or social activities, where information and media/literacy centre should be erected with radio and television in accordance with the settlement and movement patterns of the people.

It is an established fact that prosperity, progress, and development of any nation depend upon the nation's ability to acquire, produce, access, and use pertinent information. In view of the above assertion, Yahaya (2009) agrees that access to information is also critical to letting people know their entire rights from government, its policies, rules and regulations, developments, entitlements, welfare benefits and sources of support to overcome social exclusion from government both states and federal.

The fact remains that any nation that neglects the development and empowerment of the rural communities should not expect meaningful development. Rural neglects brings negative consequences such as exodus of rural dwellers to urban areas, with resulting problems of unemployment, crimes, prostitution, child labour, insecurity, poverty, proliferation

of shanty living areas, spread of diseases, and overstretching of facilities and infrastructures in the urban areas. Queuing into the discourse Alegbeleye and Aina (1999) state that the third world countries have recently come to realize that unless the rural areas are well developed, hardly would any meaningful development occur in the urban cities. This is reiterated by Okiy (2009) thus:

*“Rural development is a basis for agricultural economic development and information is an important ingredient that will inform farmers that fertilizer, agric- seeds etc are on sale. Development can only be effective if rural dwellers have timely access to the relevant, diverse information for farming activities. People in rural areas whether literate or not should have access to any kind of information which will help them to become capable and productive in their social and political obligations, to become better informed citizens generally.”*

Similarly, Diso (2011) asserts that "information must as a matter of policy, be seen as a basic resource for development if durable structures are to be provided for effective access and utilization, which entails information capturing, coordination, processing, and dissemination". For instance Nigeria has been an independent nation for the past 56 years with policies, rules and regulations on development of rural communities. But rural areas are still underdeveloped and the quality of life of people in the rural areas continues to deteriorate throughout all tiers of democratic government and the military regimes. He adduces that "Nigerian people are still dominantly peasant farmers, petty traders, middle men or commission agents". Nigeria as a nation has the potentials to develop all sectors of the economy through the exploitation of abundant human and natural/material resources that are in abundance but are dormant and untapped.

He laments that rural populace is in majority in terms of population, compare to the urban dwellers, large geographical environment, yet the amount of neglect and sufferings they encounter is unimaginable with reference to infrastructural developmental and other amenities. Despite these conditions in rural areas, one may ask; in what ways can information harnessing contribute to the development of the rural communities especially in information age? The above constraint informs this paper. It is expedient at juncture to understand who the rural dwellers are.

## **WHO IS THE RURAL DEWELLER?**

Situating the context in the light of this discourse, the questions are, 'What does it mean to be in a 'rural area' and within a 'rural community'? New English Dictionary and Thesaurus (2000) defines rural as "relating to, or characteristic of the countryside rather than the town". This connotes landscapes and geographies that have not yet been absolutely shaped by human development and significantly overlap with and connect to the natural environment. Accordingly, rural spaces and communities act as the interface between human societies and the natural world, which positions them in a significant societal role, serving as the nexus between human populations and natural places (Camara, 1990). They have vital functions in harvesting and gathering the natural resources that are distributed to and used by communities of all sizes and urbanity. Hence, cities across the globe are interdependent with rural communities for fundamental needs such as food, energy and building materials for shelter etc. In addition, rural spaces serve as 'gateways' to natural environment, meaning they provide important opportunities for people to experience, recreate in, and connect with nature. They are producers of agricultural resources of the nations, and leave within given communities that are distinct from the urban cities.

Encyclopedia Britannica of Knowledge (1768) defines rural society as a place where there is high population, high level of illiteracy, poor environment, lack of good roads, poor school facilities, poor hospital equipment, in-adequate development/infrastructure and no recreational facilities etc. Against this backdrop therefore, rural communities in Africa, Nigeria inclusive can be said to constitute the larger percentage of the population whose information and developmental needs are not adequately met and consequently they have not been able to productively participate in development process and enjoy the benefits thereof (Chester & Neelameghan, 2016). As important as rural places are to human societies, they can also be incredibly economically, socially and culturally vulnerable. The economies and identities of rural communities often develop around single-resource (agriculture) (Keller, 2010 ). In fact the general purpose of community development is to improve agriculture/horticulture and standard of living of the inhabitants. There is great need for libraries to disseminate information to the rural communities to enhance their development and overall sustainability.

## INFORMATION SERVICE TO RURAL DWELLERS

Information services are multidimensional and serve as a binding thread among different groups of rural dwellers. Scientifically information is a processed data. It can be loosely defined as that which aids decision making and serves as a nest where human development can be hinged. Gilbert and deWatteville (2010) opine that information is whatever is capable of causing a human mind to change its opinion about the current state of real world. Information services empower people as they provide knowledge which is needed for solving practical problems being faced. Information services to rural dweller can be provided through various models which include service station, farmer's home, market squire, town hall meeting, village squire and the association model. Service station refers to an information service centre providing information services to rural communities. To access information services from service station, people must physically pay visit to information centers. Tele-centers and rural information resource centers are examples of information service stations. Moreover, farmers may access information as they enquire about agricultural inputs as well as from farmers' associations etc.

For information services to be delivered, reliable information services infrastructure are needed. This may be physical or electronic in nature. It must enhance the accessibility of speech, transfer of information, images and mails/multimedia document retrieval, includes radio, television and data. For them to attain full potential of rural information services, communities must perceive the usefulness of the information that is communicated. Thus, existence of services centers does not necessarily justify the success of rural information services. It is important for the librarian to assess the perceived usefulness and benefits associated with the usage of these services centers being offered with the aid of infrastructures. Such rural information infrastructure may include the road network and vehicles needed for transporting print resources to rural information centers; radio, television, and mobile phone infrastructure for transmitting data and audio-visuals for practical demonstration of the development programmes. Success of rural development programmes depends on effective use of information in their daily activities.

Considering the non existence of those facilities, overall conditions of rural dwellers in Nigeria and indeed the entire developing nations is pathetic, it does not project favourable environment for information service delivery; bad roads, insecurity, unfriendliness, traces of abject poverty and discomfort can be seen conspicuously. In such a condition of acute shortage or absence of social amenities and essential commodities, rural dwellers adopt "rural-urban drift" as an alternative and solution to this terrible condition. Nigeria has policies and plans for developments which include rural people, but the condition of the rural communities is degenerating instead of advancing. What could be the reason for this unwanted, unhealthy, uncomfortable, and unbearable situation? The answer is not hard to determine. A high rate of illiteracy and absence of government presence in the rural community is the major contributing factor.

Abdulwahab (2009) observes that the rural populace suffers from acute social amenities, low productivity, social and economic retrogression due mainly to ignorance which is also a direct consequence of either inadequate or total lack of government presence and neglect from government representatives. Despite the fact that Nigeria is endowed with both human and natural resources our rural communities are still suffering due to absence of indices of development.

In line with the above, Diso (2011) comments that "the structural and infrastructural problems, official corruption, unstable political and economic policies, growing insecurity, and unstable power supply hamper this development". Rural inhabitants in the present day Nigeria and indeed other developing nations are not reaping from the fruits of the enormous wealth the country has. So in the light of the forgoing, it is only information services that will greatly enhance their productivity, transform their community into a lively and enlightened one, and empower their economic base. Generally, our rural populace needs information in order to articulate their desire.

## INFORMATION NEEDS OF RURAL POPULACE /COMMUNITIES

The diverse nature of rural communities indicates that their information needs are many and multidimensional. It is very important for the librarian to determine the totality of their information needs from onset. In Nigeria, for instance there is no comprehensive documentation on the information needs of rural inhabitants. The case of neglect affects both the giver and the receiver. In the past, attempts have been made to explore the needs of individual rural communities for the purpose of research. Alegbeleye and Aina (1999) enumerate information needs categories of Nigerian rural communities to include:

- **Agriculture and allied occupations:** the greatest area of information need by rural Nigerians is in agriculture, which includes planting treated seeds, soil conservation, prevention of plants and animal disease, fertilizer application, farm machineries, recommended thinning practices, proper storage of farm products, marketing techniques, cooperative activities and other agro-cultural activities;

- **Education:** information needs of the existing rural schools, needs of the illiterate's and semi-illiterates. They need to have relevant information that will develop their interest and support teaching and learning processes;
- **Housing:** rural public need information about where they can obtain lands and loans to build houses and the type of materials to be used and where they can be easily obtained.
- **Employment:** rural communities need information on employment opportunities, taxation, investment opportunities, banking and other financial activities and empowerment.
- **Transportation:** they need information on the cost of bicycles, motorcycles and vehicles and where to obtain them.
- **Religion:** recreation and cultural activities.
- **Crime and safety:** how to prevent crimes, report crimes, role of the law and enforcement agents etc.
- **The neighborhood:** information needs in the neighborhood include problems of water supply, electricity supply, environmental sanitation, refuse disposal, road maintenance and drought.
- **Health information:** on how individuals can prevent different diseases such as malaria, missals, HIV, polio, chicken pox, mumps, weeping cough, corona virus and awareness of available healthcare delivery and its cost;
- **Welfare and Family matters:** information is required on problems of marriage, marriage disputes, childcare, juvenile delinquency etc;
- **Legal matters:** information is needed on laws that affect the rural dwellers. Such law ranges from customary law, land law, family and marriage law etc;
- **Policies and Government:** information is needed on political rights of the people and how they can exercise such rights;
- **Land:** information is needed on land tenure systems, family inheritance, community land acquisition and transfer of land.

However, as listed above, development and transformation can only be possible, effective and relevant when information needs of the rural dwellers are met positively. Access to information is a strong pillar that cannot be ignored by both individual and group of people, communities etc. Information is very essential to the rural communities for optimum development. Confirming the above, Webreck (2013) states that information is a stock of knowledge which the people should strive to uphold to avert poverty, poor living conditions, sickness, illiteracy, and maintain sustainable development.

Borcherdt (2011), complimenting the need for rural information needs, remarks that "none of the thousands of projects in the developing countries can be executed without the fundamental conditions of the establishment of a literate and numerate (rural) society, and a system for continuous provision of exchange of ideas, thought and knowledge on which the (rural) society, can feed and use with suitable modifications to constructions of our own cultural and industrial destiny". Camble (2009) comments that "the success of rural information programmes rest squarely on the availability and use of quality information by rural development workers and rural people and that many rural development programmes have failed in developing countries because they were planned with insufficient and inaccurate data about rural dwellers' needs". The development of the rural populace should not be carried out on assumption, there must be sufficient information about their needs, and the type of developmental information they require.

## **INFORMATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Rural community development encompasses a range of approaches and activities, aims at improving the welfare and livelihood of people living in rural areas. As a branch of community development, these approaches pay attention to social issues particularly community organizing, farming, community fishing/hunting etc. This is in contrast to other forms of rural development that focus on public works (e.g. rural roads and electrification) and technology (e.g. tools and

techniques for improving agricultural production). Rural community development is important because it is where large part of the population engage in agriculture. These types of developments are enhanced through effective participation of rural people in rural communities. It also entails the management of their own socio economic and environmental objectives by empowering people, particularly their men through organizations such as local farmer's cooperatives. Having witnessed the slow pace of African development, Nyerere (1967) states thus: "while other countries in the world aim to reach the moon, the African nations must aim for the time being at any rate to reach the villages by providing them with necessary information for development" that will wipe illiteracy and backwardness and move them forward. Nyerere's assertion 53 years ago is still relevance because villagers are still in the same position, without hope of moving forward.

For long, history has shown that rural communities in Africa have suffered from government neglect, no meaningful development largely because of poor policy implementation and corruptions that leads to artificially gaps created by the governments to effect development and economic growth. Houndo (2014) in analyzing these issues argues that economic growth remains robust in African urban cities, but the region has seen a steady rise in the number of extremely poor people. He concludes that two-third of Africa's population live and work in rural areas, which offer huge land surfaces, and agriculture that represents 65 per cent of jobs in Sub-Sahara. Yet, rural areas have been undervalued by governments, international development leaders and policy advisers. As a result, per capita food production has barely grown over the last 50 years, agriculture only represents 17 percent of Sub-Sahara's GDP, and its productivity is low and even declining. These conditions, considered harsh by the majority of the rural dwellers, result in massive migration into urban areas to look for greener pasture, and often in search of formal employment, as the only option for survival. In trying to alleviate this problem, UNESCO has since established an institution that aids information services in some developing countries to serve as a catalyst for meaningful development.

Empowering rural people to be among global players in the knowledge-based economy can only be achieved if government-both federal, state and local government plays its roles by putting all necessary structures on ground, also rural people must be made to be aware of the importance and role of information for development. Thus, it can be said that, information, if well-articulated could eradicate ignorance and give enlightenment on how to achieve economic, educational, social, political and cultural objectives towards the development of the entire community.

In addition to this, utilization of information in a coherent form can raise aspiration, through arousing people from fatalism, fear of change and desire for a better life and zeal/determination to work for it. This can create an intellectual climate, which stimulates people to take another look at their own current practices and future perspectives. Ideally, information brings about knowledge, and a knowledgeable community is also an informed community. This signifies that no community can develop without knowledge, and a community can only become knowledgeable if they recognize and use information as their tool for development.

Access to the right information can address major problems that hinder rural community development and also improve chances for livelihood. A researcher like Alex- Pox (2013) has reported that an increase in income was received because farmers' cooperatives that are well informed were able to respond appropriately to changes in the market. This has made them to compete with other commercial farmers' through communal viewing of agricultural programs on television and telephone conversation with distance friends and relatives. It also strengthened their social networks that such people today continue to develop themselves with information they acquired. Societal needs are satisfied through various kinds of activities, each of which requires information as an input.

That is why Panos (1998) stresses that access to information is an essential condition for development. From this juncture, it could be said that information if well uttered and packaged for rural communities will exterminate poverty, ignorance and give knowledge/enlightenment on how to achieve economic, social, educational, political and cultural objectives towards the development of the entire society. The relevance of this revolution is supported by Balit (2010) who asserts that the least expensive input for rural development is knowledge. Knowledge and information are basic ingredients of making one to be self reliant and are essential for facilitating rural development including industrial and social facilities that bring economic change.

In Muniyua's (2013) view, rural communities require information inter alia on supply of inputs, new technologies, early warning systems (drought, pests, and diseases), credit, market prices and their competitors. For this reason, information can be regarded as a basic resource by rural communities which the populace may use to improve their conditions of living and is essential for developmental processes. Not only does information expand the possibilities of social, political, educational and economic development of any country, it also facilitates awareness and empowerment. Information is an asset and a resource for overall community development. In context to the foregoing, Aguolu (2010) views information as embodying interrelated or structured data which are required to enable one to act knowledgeably as well as to take appropriate decisions. Thus, information managers naturally play the role of contributing to the steady development of community, implant ideas, open up minds, fire imagination, release the brake of ignorance and dynamics of progress, inspire younger minds to see vision and contribute to the growth of the nation through the channels of information acquisitions for the rural dwellers.

## CHANNELS OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS

Channels of information acquisition and dissemination refer to transfer or exchange of information from person to person or from one place to another. It is an action that produces reaction, whether positive or negative, communication has taken place. James (2012) states that information delivery is not a one way affair, there must be a sender to transmit the message, and a receiver to make appropriate decisions on how the rest of the exchange should be. This involves exchange of ideas, facts, opinion, attitudes and beliefs between people. The ability to communicate and pass information is a key factor in all cultures whether literate or not. Fayose and Dike (2012) depict that many cultures survived today without the written word, so effective communication can take place without reading or writing. Thus, the following are channels through which information is passed to the rural communities:

**Age Groups:** Age Groups are old institutions that comprise mostly males within the same age-brackets-usually those born within one to five years age range. The Age Groups helps in getting things in order in the society in which they belong. The name of age groups are derived either from the name of their patron or father. The Age groups carry out community development project which include the cleaning of the source of water supply, the building and maintenance of roads and bridges, village squares, assembly houses and deity shrine; the execution of laws and decision of the council of elders and the lineage or village assembly, including the collection of dues and fines, the punishment of crime and the burial of the dead. The age groups also help in educating the young groups about the traditions and needs for the maintenance of their culture.

**Ivory Horns and Long Brass:** These produce notes that can vary in length and tone. These are used to communicate long messages and herald important events. The long brass horn are mainly found in Northern states of Nigeria while the Ivory horns are found in the Southern and Eastern States of the country where they have also become states symbols of titled men.

**Inter-Personal:** This is simply referred to as face-to-face communication. It is the exchange of ideas and information between sender and receiver. The mode of interaction is usually of a conversational nature and involves the exchange of either verbal or non-verbal information between two or more people, in a face-to-face or voice-to-voice setting. Interpersonal communication dominates our activities at home, office, market and elsewhere. It helps to break the barrier of formal relationships, generates warmth and creates harmony that is necessary for socio-economic development. In this kind of communication, it is necessary for the participants to be close enough to enable them to conversationally interact. The personal mannerism of either the sender or the receiver should be apparently clear enough for effective communication. The parties involved in interpersonal communication are all active. The major advantage is immediate response, which may provide signal for the encoder to modify his subsequent message to achieve a determined objective. Aderibigbe (2012) believes that interpersonal communication is the major means of linking the rural farmers since majority of them are illiterate.

**The Talking Drum:** The talking drum is another traditional media of communication which helps in developing the rural communities. The talking drum is an extension of oral tradition. This talking drum is also regarded as the "Ekwe or Ikoro" in the Igbo communities. It reproduces the tonal pattern of a sentence in the proper sequence and can be heard over a very long distance. The talking drum serves for two-pronged communicative functions: Official and social functions.

**Town crier:** Traditional mass media serve both utilitarian and aesthetic purposes. They form the vehicle for acquisition and dissemination of information to rural people. Ngwaimbi (2014) notes that traditional media is the live theatre of rural people. Town criers are popular among African rural people in terms of their longevity of use and their effectiveness in transmitting messages. He explains that in many rural areas town criers are village messengers who go from village to village delivering messages. Occasional striking a bell or drum, they report the news to attendant villagers. This village messengers "give the news headlines thereby arousing the villagers' interest. There are different methods used by town criers to communicate information. They include talking drum, gung, bell, trumpeters etc. The choice and method depends on the type of information he has to deliver. For effective communication, librarian must involve the town criers for him to succeed in his mission.

**In Market places:** There are various societal activities that take place in the rural environment and the rural people use the market environment to disseminate such information from one society to another. Awa (2012) observes that many issues and events are discussed in market places more than elsewhere. He suggests that market sites could be used to disseminate rural development information to farmers to make it faster and effective since most villages go there. African markets have been successfully used for advertising new food products and drugs. For example, pseudo-



pharmacists sell non-prescribed and prescribed medicines to hundreds of people in the market places. Moreover, information on better nutrition and inter-village relationship are spread by local agents trained by Afri-centric technicians. This mode of communication is development oriented and messages are self-evident.

**Lectures, demonstrations and film shows:** Lectures, demonstrations, and shows are also methods of information dissemination to both the elites and rural people. To support this, Ladipo (1999) emphasizes that lectures and demonstrations are effective means of passing new information to people. For instance, lecture on oral rehydration therapy (ORT) may be combined with the demonstration of how to prepare the sugar/salt solution for the treatment of diarrhea. Ajakaiye (2010) suggest that agricultural shows and exhibitions should be used to educate farmers on improved methods of farming. It offers opportunity to farmers to see and consider for adoption, results of materials used in research institutes and agro-allied concerns; and it helps farmers in assessing the success of previous efforts and in formulating policies that would help farming population of rapid agricultural development.

**Modern channels:** Communication and entertainment are important for rural living. Bame (2015) noted that access to modern communication media makes rural lives more productive and comfortable. Today, rural projects, businesses, schools and growing number of households make daily use of audio-visual equipments like radio, television, video, mobile phone etc. The services are wide, and they could be as crucial as a 2-way radio link between a remote clinic and an urban hospital. The modern communication equipment for rural people such as radio, telephone, video and video-player and public address system, GSM (Global System for Mobile) are very important channels of information acquisition and dissemination to rural people. The use of GSM by the rural dwellers enables them to communicate timely and accurately with people outside their environment. Munyua (2013) observes that traditional and modern Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) could be used concurrently to speed up the circulation of information.

In many African countries, ICTs are used in drama, dance, folklore, group discussion, meetings, exhibitions, demonstrations, agricultural shows, and many others. Audio-visual media are popular with illiterate rural people. It gives them opportunity to see and discuss complete agricultural techniques before using them. Audiovisual technology also improves mental retention, and for these reasons educators are making use of videos, television programmes, films, slides and pictures in training sessions for farmers. Morgan (2014) in his study of villagers who use radio in Kenya, discovered that rural radio listening in the Meru, Nithi and Tharaka Districts of Kenya indicated a penetration of 69% among rural households. He proffers that the possession of radio sets, access to newspapers, and television sets in the rural area are positive indicators of information development. These media programmes are meant for demonstration and educate the communities on modern agricultural and health practices. In Gambia and Ghana, the radio soap operas, according to Babalola (2011) have motivated men and women to seek and use family planning services. And in Nigeria the Anambra State Ministry of Health used radio programmes titled "Dibia ezi na ulo" (Family Doctor) and "Ezi-na ulo" (our family) to influence the health habits of the people. Access to information is a strong pillar that cannot be ignored by either the individual, groups of people, community or local governments because of its numerous benefits. Deducing from above, achievement can be made if the local government chairmen, ward councilors and all stake holders in the communities should liaise with information professionals in their areas to provide responsive community support services for better community development.

## **CHALLENGES OF INFORMATION DESSIMINATION TO RURAL DEWELLERS**

One of the greatest challenges that affect information services to rural dweller is the inability of most rural people to read, write and understand information. The reason could be the environmental factors, which include lack of learning environment, backwardness and majority of them are illiterate. This means that the information manager must either understand their language or ask for an interpreter who will serve as an intermediary between them. In Nigeria and indeed the entire Africa continent illiteracy is a serious problem which the government, educational and development authorities cannot afford to ignore. It is an established fact that an illiterate person cannot play a full part in the social and economic development of his country. Another predicament is that communication must be oral or most often dramatized for them to understand the message. For instance, oral communication has been used by authorities carrying out political, health, agricultural, religious, and community education in rural areas. But this method is not as effective as the printed word. The ability to read and write is a *sine qua non* of full citizenship and the right to education is one of the fundamental rights of man. It is believed that the level of a country's socio-economic development depends very much on the reading ability of its people. 'A reading nation is a well-informed nation; it cannot be easily cheated or exploited'.

One of the disadvantages that the rural populace experience compared to their urban counterpart is the lack of information facilities. Hence he is less informed while his urban counterpart, through the use of information facilities, is able to qualify for better jobs, attain higher academic and professional qualifications and is generally better informed.

Government must ensure that proper environment such as good roads, house, schools, libraries and other necessities of life should not be status symbols for only the privileged few. The rural dweller thus desperately needs educational institutions and libraries/media centers to improve their lot. Culture is also another challenge: there are some cultures that exclude female in discussion even in their families. In most town/villages in African settings including Nigeria females are barred from taking part in some cultural gatherings, discussions and cultural dances. For instance, in Igbo land there are some gathering a woman cannot address, like a gathering of the 'red cap chiefs'.

## CONCLUSION

Sustainability and progress in rural communities is tied to information harnessing which enhances development of the rural areas. Effective information service delivery and coordination is the essential ingredient for development. Information service for rural communities must be recognized and empowered. The paper concludes that information service has never been effective and useful to the rural inhabitants of the country since independence in 1960. The information service policy of the country was never implemented in favor of rural dwellers. The emphasis is on government activities and propaganda, which do not have any positive impact on the rural dwellers.

## RECOMMENDATION

A literate society is a developed community. Any community whose populace does not have access to adequate information cannot achieve sustainable development, especially in this era of information age. A developing or rural community should be able to have easy and unlimited access to desired information for continuity and better community life. Information professionals should always strive to find new and innovative means to serve the communities with adequate support and leadership role of local chief, elders in the community, local government chairmen etc. It will not be out of context to state that, there are communities - rural and marginalized communities - in developing as well as in developed countries whose information needs are not adequately met and consequently they have not been able to productively participate in the development process and enjoy the benefits thereof. Equity and justice requires that any program for socio-economic development, whether general or in a specific sector, should cover and benefit all sections of the society, irrespective of race, caste, colour, religion, culture and other social, economic or political differences. Members of these communities, as they live close to nature and have a stake in the preservation and nurturing of nature and its offerings, acquire a wealth of knowledge about their environment that could be of value to the greater good to all. The paper is of the opinion that if all the stake holders can play their parts in providing developmental facilities, the information professionals will on their own offer professional guideline and serve as a link between the rural communities and the government.

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